5

This is number five
in a series entitled
A Typographic Quest
from Westvaco

TYPO

graphic

CONTRAST

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W I

what's
TYPOGRAPHY
got to do with *music?*

People who are sensitive to the subtleties of graphic design often express their appreciation of a particular arrangement by trying to give it a vocal form. They will look at something and say "da *da* da DUM" or "deedee deedee deedee *ping!*" or some other nonsense phrase to interpret the rhythm and emphasis of the visual experience. This kind of noise can scarcely be called music, but it does express the common denominator of graphic form and musical form: rhythm and emphasis, harmony and contrast.

Typography has its DIMINUENDO and its CRESCENDO, just as it has its pianissimo and its **FORTISSIMO,** its s t a c c a t o passages and its *glissando*. More than this, typography can very often express the same kinds of moods as the musical composition; in fact, one can often deduce a designer's taste in music by the nature of his design; the devotees of Bach, Bartók, or Brubeck will often reflect their musical preferences in their typographic design.

Music is design with abstract sound, and typography is design with abstract visual forms, and it is inevitable that the two should have many principles in common. Harmony and contrast are fundamental to both, and the discovery of these basic principles and their application to the design of printed matter is the object of this volume of A TYPOGRAPHIC QUEST.

WEST VIRGINIA PULP AND PAPER COMPANY

1

TYPOGRAPHIC
HARMONY

Any study of contrast in typography must be prefaced with an understanding of the basic characteristic of visual communication—the harmony of all of the elements of the page. This essential concord goes back to the earliest of man's attempts to record events, ideas or transactions on a surface which could be marked with a tool. The nature of the surface, and the kind of mark made by the tool on it, determined the forms of the characters of the inscription and the thickness of the individual strokes of the character. It was inevitable that a Babylonian scribe, pressing a wedge-shaped bone into a soft clay surface would achieve a uniformity in the size and structure of his characters. An Egyptian priest using a reed as a writing instrument to mark the surface of papyrus would without conscious effort arrive at a page of consistent color, as would his successors working with other forms, such as the Greek and Roman alphabets. This tradition of harmony was so deeply rooted in the development of visual communication that it was natural for the earliest practitioners of the art of printing to retain that uniformity of the tonal value of each character, and thus of the whole printed page. The very fact that the first printers had to cut their own type faces, and did not have a variety of sizes and styles to choose from, ensured that their printed pages would have that consistency of appearance which we call harmony.

An Egyptian papyrus scroll of the sixteenth century B.C. The hieratic script shows an early example of typographic harmony.

Below: In spite of a wealth of styles of type available in the late eighteenth century, John Baskerville used restraint to create this harmonious page.

Above: A written page of the late ninth century A.D. uses the Carolingian minuscule woven into another harmonious page.

ABC
DEF
GHIJ
KLM
NOP

CASLON OLD STYLE

QRS
TUV
WXY
Z&
ABC

BODONI

AB
CD
EF
GH

SAPPHIRE

ABCD
EFGH
IJKLM
NOPQ
RSTU
VWXY

UNIVERS

THE ELEMENTS
OF HARMONY

It should not be assumed that because the
examples on page 4 are drawn from
earlier periods of typographic history or
prehistory, that harmony is something
old-fashioned. Much contemporary
typography relies just as much on a highly
disciplined harmony of all of its parts.
What exactly, then, are the elements which
go to make up harmony? In the first
place, the consistent relationship between
the thickness of the strokes as against
the open spaces—the ratio between ink
and paper. Gutenberg's characters were
dominantly black, but the forms of
the heavy vertical letters were consistent
throughout his page, and the result was
harmony. On the other hand, a modern,
light, sans serif sets up a different ratio
between the printed area and its
paper. This page is an example of such
harmony. Where there are variations in the
thickness of the strokes, this too will be
consistent. Rules and decorative
border material will echo these white-
to-black relationships, the thick and thin
qualities of the letter, or repeat a motif
which is part of the letter itself.

the basic contrast—
size

The first break in the uniform texture created by the
consistent use of a tool marking a surface was to vary
the size of the characters made. The Roman stone
engravers brought this to a fine and subtle art, where
the basic letter maintained the same ratio between the
weight of the stroke and the background, but the
size of the letters could vary from line to line;
the flexibility of the brush used in the wall notices of
Pompeii encouraged this development. In the field
of printing history, the first applications of the contrast
of size developed slowly, because of the need to cut
special types for these varying sizes. Initials and title
pages were the first applications. As the material
resources of typography accumulated, a wide range of
sizes became available, and the printer could play on
contrast of size at will. The wide range of sizes of
type available to the modern printer is demonstrated
on page 4 of volume 3 of this series.
A simple but dramatic contrast of size provides a point
to which the reader's attention is drawn. Set in the
same style of type, it maintains the overall harmony of
the composition by maintaining the exact relationship
of the letter to the background. It is only a physical
enlargement of the basic pattern created by the form
and the weight of the type being used for the text.

Herbarius · Ma-
guntie impreſſus ·
Anno ꝛ̃ · lxxxiiij ·

Thirty years after the advent of movable type, this first
title page using a larger type was printed by Schoeffer

IN THE NAME OF ALMIGHTY GOD

I, JOHN, LORD OF JOINVILLE, SENESCHAL OF
CHAMPAGNE, HAVE CAUSED THE LIFE OF OUR
SAINTLY KING LOUIS TO BE WRITTEN ACCORDING
AS I SAW AND HEARD FOR THE SPACE OF THE SIX
YEARS THAT I WAS IN HIS COMPANY ON PILGRIM-
AGE BEYOND THE SEA AND AFTER WE CAME BACK.
And ere I tell you of his great deeds and his knightly prowess will I tell you
what I saw and heard of his godly sayings and his good precepts, so that they
may be found set out after the other to edify those that shall hear them.
This holy man loved God with all his heart and followed His example: as
appeareth in that even as God died for the love He bare His people, so put he
his body in jeopardy many times for the love he bare his people; and he might
well have avoided it an he had wished, as ye shall hear hereafter.
The great love that he had for his people appeareth in his saying to my lord
Louis, his eldest son, in a dire illness that he had at Fontainebleau: 'Fair son,'
said he, 'I beseech thee to make thyself beloved of the people of thy realm; for
in sooth I had liefer have a Scot come from Scotland and govern the people of
this realm faithfully and well, than that thou shouldst govern it manifestly ill.'
The saintly King loved truth so well that not even to the Saracens would he
lie concerning his covenant with them, as ye shall hear hereafter.
So sober was he of his mouth that on no day of my life did I know him give
thought to the ordering of any dish, as many rich men do; but he patiently ate
whatsoever his cooks dressed and set before him. In his words was he temperate;
for never in my life did I hear him speak ill of another, nor did I ever hear him
name the Devil; which name is spilled about the kingdom, which methinks
pleaseth God ill. He watered his wine in measure, according as he saw the wine
would stand it. He asked me in Cyprus why I did not put water in my wine;
and I told him that the physicians were the cause, who said that I had a thick
head and a cold stomach, and that therefore I could not get drunk. And he

Size variations in the letters designed by Alfred Fairbank
for the Gregynog Press make a handsome page of text

Droll

Stories: thirty tales by HONORÉ DE
BALZAC completely translated into
modern English by JACQUES LE
CLERCQ. *Volume* III: The Third Ten Tales.
The Limited Editions Club, *New York,* 1932

W. A. Dwiggins used a single large word to commence
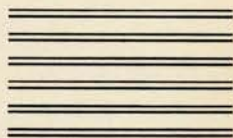his title page for a Limited Editions Club book in 1932
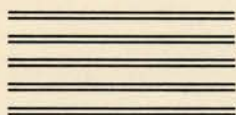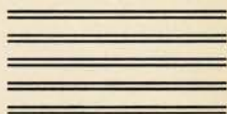
PAPER
& PRINT

PAPER
& PRINT

Paper&Print

P
APER
& PRINT
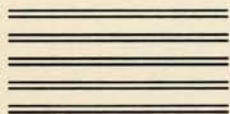
paper
& print

PAPER
AND
PRINT

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paper
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print

applications of
the contrast of
size

The simplest and most common
application of the contrast of size is
that in which a heading is set in a
larger size of the same type as used for
text, as in the first example opposite.
But there are innumerable variations
on this theme which the designer
will explore in order to use this
contrast to interpret the message and
to increase the effectiveness of the
design. Some of the possibilities are
indicated on the facing page—the
stepping of sizes to lead into the text,
and place emphasis on one word;
the use of a large initial as a visual focal
point; the singling out of a decorative
unit like the ampersand (&) as a design
motif, as in the last two examples.
The larger sizes of type used to achieve
contrast of size are referred to as
"display" types, as opposed to the text
sizes used for normal reading matter.
Most standard text types are available
in display sizes, but there are literally
thousands of other display types
which have no direct companion face
in the text sizes. For a full discussion
of display types, refer to volume 2
of A Typographic Quest.

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b **b**

contrast of **weight**

The weight of a letter may be described as
the ratio between the black impression of the
inked letter and the white background of
the paper. Increasing the thickness of the
strokes of a letter to make a type face darker
was an innovation of the nineteenth century.
None of the original designers of the classical
roman letters ever contemplated a "bold"
version of their letters. However, the eye-
directing emphasis provided by bold versions
of the standard types are commonly used as
subheads throughout text. But beyond the
mere bold weights, many types have extremely
black versions, and in the contemporary sans
serif faces, as many as six different weights
of letters have been produced. These
variations in weight provide the designer with
a wide range of effective contrasts to
achieve emphasis for a single word, to bring
out a heading to dominate the text, or to
create a focal point to draw the attention. Not
only types of varying weight, but other
typographic material such as rules, spots,
squares, etc. can be called into service
to provide a heavy area for a powerful point
of visual attraction or emphasis.

PAPER &
PRINT

PAPER &
PRINT

paper
&
print

Paper
& Print

C c

CONTRAST OF *form*

The process of reading is basically one of rapid
visual identification of a group of varying forms—
the letters of the alphabet. The legibility of a
type face is judged by the ease with which these
forms can be distinguished from each other.
This is the very basis of the contrast of form—
the combinations of round forms and of lines
running vertically, horizontally or diagonally.
Each letter of normal text types has four
variations, or even completely different forms:
a roman capital and a roman lower-case, an
italic capital and an italic lower-case, as indicated
in the four variations of the letter E on the
opposite page. The most frequent use of contrast
of these forms is the employment of *italics* to
emphasize a word or a passage in text. While
most type faces are restricted to the four basic
form alternatives, some have also condensed and
expanded versions which broaden the scope of
possible combinations. At the same time, there
are some script types which harmonize with
standard types, such as the Bank Script and
Bodoni on the opposite page, and can be used for
dramatic change of form. (It should be noted,
however, that script types and italics, both being
versions of handwritten letters, conflict with
each other if used together.) As a result of these
variations, visually interesting effects which
express the content of the message can be
achieved by the juxtaposition of those forms
which stand in vigorous, while harmonious,
contrast to each other.

12

E e
e
E

Paper & PRINT

PAPER & *print*

PAPER & *print*

paper & PRINT

a	*a*	**a**
SANS SERIF	SCRIPT	SQUARE SERIF
a	**a**	**a**
BLACK LETTER	CLASSIC ROMAN	DECORATIVE

Paper
& PRINT

PAPER
and print

PAPER
and print

contrast of
structure

The families of type and their structural
characteristics have been discussed in the first
volume of this series; each type face derives
its individuality from the way in which it differs
in structure from every other type face. The
six examples opposite indicate the major broad
divisions of type—the monotone sans serif
and square serif types, the roman, the text or
black letter, the scripts, and the wide range of
decorative types. Within each of these major
groupings there are many subdivisions with only
minor variations in structure. For example,
between the old style and the transitional types,
there are only subtle variations of serif formation
and angle of stress. Contrast of structure in
typographical design should therefore be contrast
between the major groups: playing off types
within the same group will result not in contrast,
but conflict. The use of contrast of structure
may be compared to the orator who changes
his voice not to increase or decrease the volume,
but to change the very *quality* of his voice to suit
his words. If the three examples on the opposite
page are studied, it will be seen that, in each case,
the types in the two lines could be switched,
with a resultant difference in the *quality* of the
emphasis put on each word.

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EEEE eeeee and evid **, as they are capo**
EEEE eeeee [a]lmost se to the greates
EEEE eeeee he hous **may yet make fa**
vere built on stilts in the **the straight roa**
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as the sun glows down. C

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R—A beachco
sorbed instantly . . . it lingers
against dry skin. Perfect und

XERCISER THA[T]
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[AP]PEARANCE OF
[FA]BULOUS EXERC[ISE]
[T]O GIVE RESUL[T]
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writings of the ancients, to thei[r]
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contrast of TEXTURE
TEXTURE
TEXTURE
TEXTURE
TEXTURE

16

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arm to steer you

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truth discovered was a rule available in
ones. Nor in this perhaps shall I appear

XERCISER THAT HAS BEEN
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BULOUS EXERCISER IS EN-
TO GIVE RESULTS IN SOME

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and beauty; that Poesy has its ravishing gra mmitm ung setzen könne. Und de *ep bewilderm*
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y suited to gratify the inquisitive, as well as fur anerkannt würde. In einer
hat matches rhym

essen the labour of man; that numerous highly day Inn in a neat and
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and error, ay Inn nearby for the finest in food, service and lodging
ir real valu in your washable, packable Claire Tiffany Trave any flattering shade between—to lend a co
om McCall's patterns. Make them, as we dic
elieved that I had alre sts. The fabrics chosen have been treated
ages, and likewise to pattern 8267, is softly shirred at the wide ne
e ancients, to their Hi walk past solid, blazing rows of chr amity. Beside it, a two-tone classic sheath in
nverse with those of oth anthemums so thick that you ca gladio3, view D. On the opposite page, a Larry Ald
the same thing. It is u even see a leaf in between! You ll-defined waistline and a wide front panel
see dahlias, and asters, and ashel linen, in lime, shapes this dress from
and zinnias so massive, so exquisi
so breathtakingly beautiful that y
hardly believe that they are the sa
plants that you put into the grour
And when your neighbors begin to
pour into your yard—when you watch
them bend and touch these flowers to

The texture of type is the composite of all the attributes we
have described thus far — size, weight, form and structure —
when viewed as a mass, either as a line or lines of a head-
ing, or a setting of text. This texture is in turn changed as
space is let in between the lines. The page you are reading
now is made up of type which is smaller, bolder, and more
widely leaded than any of the previous pages in this book;
it obviously has a different texture. Each of the pages in this
book, set in different types, has its own textural quality. The
montage above was made up of clippings from a variety of
sources and will just begin to indicate the rich and endless
varieties of textures which can be created from the types in
everyday use. Like threads in cloth, types form the fabric
of our daily communication.

PAPER & PRINT

PAPER
PRINT

& paper print

contrast of color

The use of color to bring contrast to the typographic page goes back to the Mainz Psalter printed by Fust and Schoeffer in 1457. While much modern printing—particularly in the book field—is restricted to black and white, in most cases the printer has a second color to work with. But color is often misused through a failure to evaluate the relative strength of the color and the accompanying black against the white background of the paper. The heading for this page, for example, properly uses the color for the subordinate words and puts the word requiring emphasis in black; the green used is the weaker of the two colors. This is further demonstrated in the first line on the opposite page. The second line on the opposite page shows how, in reversing against a black background, the color recedes and the white of the paper emerges as visually stronger. In the bottom panel, however, the color becomes the background with the type reversed and surprinted on it; in this case, the type has approximately equal strength because the background color is of a middle value. If the green were darker, the black would be less strong; if it were lighter, the white would fade into it. It is most important to accurately judge whether the second color to be used advances to visually dominate the black (as red will do), or recedes to become the weaker partner in the contrast of color.

gggggggggg
ggggggg
gggggg

CONTRAST OF DIRECTION
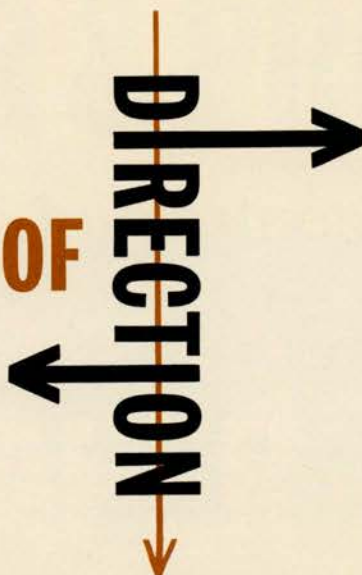
The opposition between the vertical and the horizontal is fundamental to man; he walks erect on the horizontal surface of the earth and he comes to rest parallel to it. He builds using the pull of gravitation on a plumb bob to ensure the vertical stability of his structures, and when one of his buildings begins to lean, it becomes one of the wonders of the world! While our reading habits dictate a horizontal left-to-right flow, the occasional word set at an angle can create a visual tension in typography. But letters should seldom, if ever, be stacked one above the other; their varying widths make them unsightly and they are difficult to read. But these tensions can also exist in a letter of vertical structure spread in widely leaded horizontal lines—like this page. Or as shown on the opposite page, the shape of a block of text can give a horizontal or vertical structure to the layout, which may be reinforced by illustrations which are composed or cropped in either direction.

DOWN
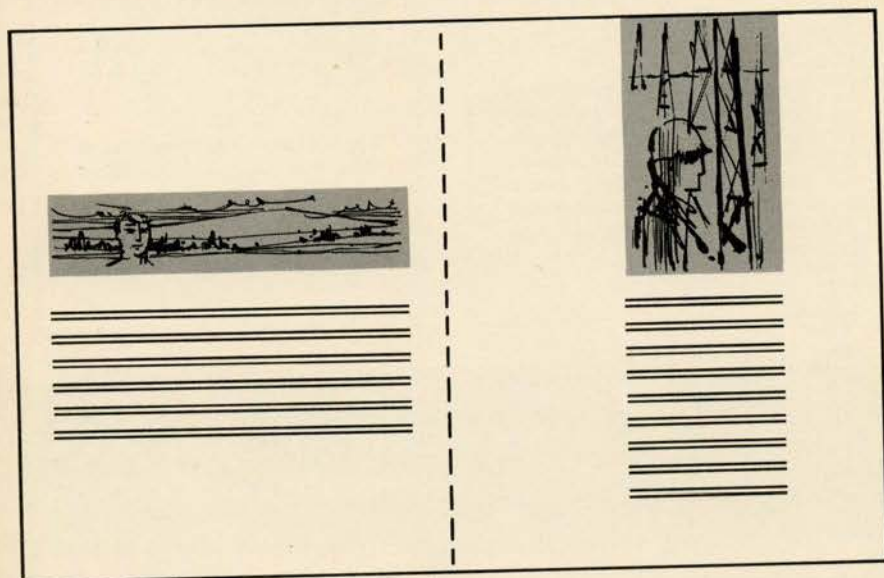
PAPER & PRINT

non-typographic
contrasts

The exploration of purely typographic contrasts would be incomplete without some reference to other contrasts which, while not relying on type, are part of the typographer's range of effects. The first of these is contrast by isolation, in which an element is emphasized simply by being surrounded by white space; the heading of this page illustrates this point. Contrast against the unbroken surface of paper can be provided by die-cutting openings in the surface. Visual contrasts of printed surfaces can be provided by the use of opposing matte inks to glossy inks. In a similar way, paper surfaces can be used to achieve contrast by the collation of coated papers with text or antique papers, or papers of different colors. Embossing can bring a three-dimensional, tactile contrast. Finally there is the contrast between the type, marshalled in rigid mechanical lines, with the various media of illustration: the looseness of the artist's pen or brush line, the wood engraving, and the photograph, either square-cut or silhouette. The type itself may harmonize with the line of the illustration, or it may contrast sharply in weight with the illustration; judgements of relative weight and size must be carefully considered.
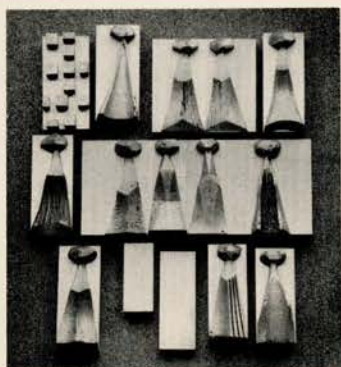
sculpture

sculpture

23
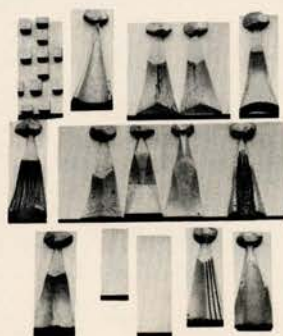
the
notes
of typography

Going back to the original analogy between typography and music which launched this discussion, it is apparent that to this point we have analyzed the individual notes of contrast in the typographic scale; they are summarized graphically on the facing page. Practicing scales is a pretty dull occupation in either music or typography, but it does develop dexterity in hitting the right note at the right time. Just sitting back with a specimen book of available types and checking out those which in one way or another provide a contrast with any other type is the kind of exercise that will sharpen the awareness of the design potential that exists within the most limited range of types; only this kind of familiarity with type can lay the basis for the more complex problems of multiple contrasts.

contrast of size

contrast of weight

contrast of form

contrast of structure

contrast of texture

contrast of color

contrast of direction

a a

b b

c c

d d

EE *ee*
EE *ee*

F F

gggggggg

PAPER

Paper is the raw material of modern communication, from the child's first scribbler to the most advanced report on a scientific subject. Without paper, both commerce and education would grind to a halt and civilization would wither.

&

Printing is the basis of communication in our twentieth century world, a basis of mass education and information, the repository of knowledge and of culture, a vital cog in the machinery of commerce and industry. The alliance of paper and print is the mortar of our social edifice.

PRINT

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the
chords
of typography

While the single contrasts discussed so far are effective in themselves in helping to create more lively typography, it is in the combination of two or more contrasts that the real inherent richness of our typographic material becomes evident. The headings throughout this book, even when a single contrast was referred to, have usually employed a second contrast—that of color—to improve the design of the page. These are what we might call the *chords of typography*, and the range of possibilities opened up is practically endless. Examine, for example, the few experimental settings at the right, where with only two elements with which to work, more than one kind of contrast is brought into play. This naturally raises the question of how many contrasts can be used simultaneously without the design turning into a visual shambles? To answer this, refer to the tall, narrow layout on the opposite page. This has three basic elements: a heading which, although it is intercepted by two blocks of copy, is tied together by its color and its directional movement, and is therefore a single unit; the two copy areas comprise two more elements. Now check the contrasts; they are all there —size, weight, form, structure, texture, color and direction, all in one layout!

clear *Spring*

inspiration text

PINNACLE
OFFSET

Sterling
LITHO

CORONATION
litho

VELVO
text

27

TYPOGRAPHIC
rhythm

No treatise on typographic contrast is complete without reference to rhythm, especially when the analogy to music is made. Rhythm in music is a relationship of definite intervals of time; in typography, it consists of intervals of space. To help understand this, look at the pattern of lines on the opposite page; notice how interval A is the same throughout, and the larger interval B recurs as well. This pattern is composed of all the vertical strokes of the word "rhythm" at the top of this page (with liberties taken with the form of the "y" to demonstrate the point). Now look at the two unfamiliar scripts below, and see how rhythms are set up between the inner counters of the characters and the spaces between the characters, so that the vertical strokes of the characters make a rhythmic pattern. With this in mind, it should be possible to look at any page of Latin letters and see the same pattern. The last panel shows that repetition is not rhythm; let the dots represent drum beats and it can be seen that only varied intervals or different beats will avoid monotony.
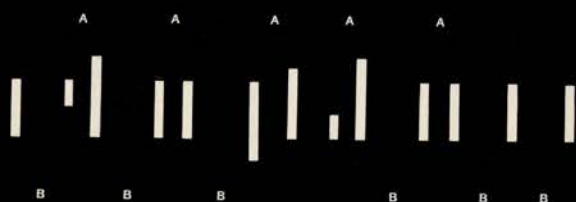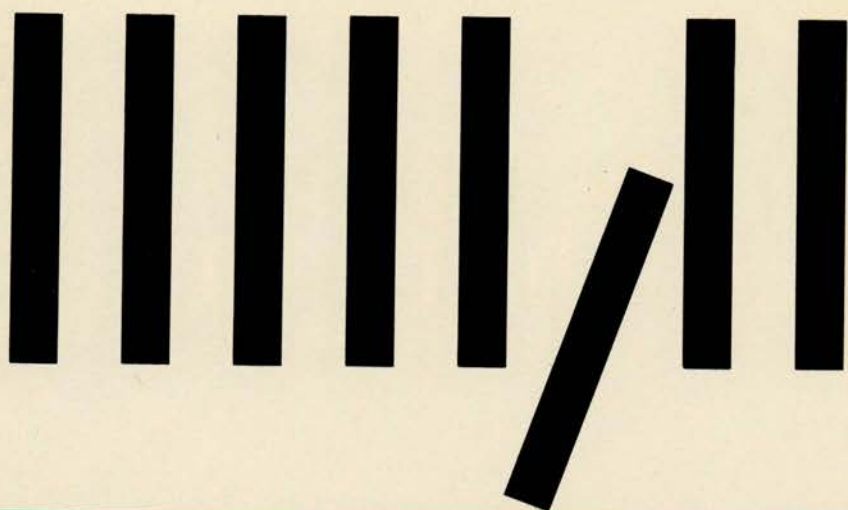
ในภาษาไทยมีพยัญชนะทั้งหมด ๔๔ ตัว ตัวอักษรตัวแรก ดือ ก ไก่ และอักษรตัวสุดท้ายเป็นฮนกฮูก แต่ทว่า ตัวอักษรหลายตัวนั้นใช้ น้อยมาก และบางตัวเลิกใช้แล้ว สำหรับการออกเสียงวรรณยุกต์นั้น พยัญชนะทั้ง ๔๔ ตัว ถูกจำแนกออกเป็นสามพวก คือ
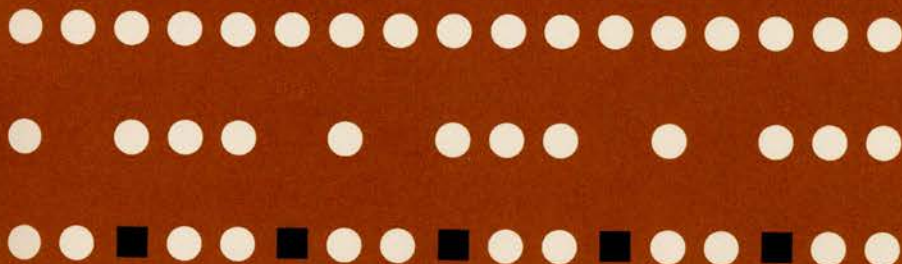
ABCDEF
GHIJKLM
NOPQRST
U XYZ

WV

inter up ed
rhythm

Early jazz musicians used a device
they called the "break." Having
established a steady beat that set feet
to tapping, they would suddenly
miss one or more beats completely
before picking up the rhythm again.
This created an auditory shock which
has its visual equivalent in typography.
The white panel on the facing page
supplies an abstract example of an
interrupted rhythm; the dropped and
tilted rule becomes the focal point.
Perhaps you read this line of type
as soon as you looked at this
page: the rhythm of leaded bold
lines was broken and attention was
focused on the break. In the
color panel at the left, the eye
instantly recognizes the pattern of
the alphabet, and the letters which are
missing become the point of
attention. Satisfaction comes only
when they are discovered in their new
relationship below. It should be
understood that the impact derives
not from the fact that the unexpected
happens, but rather that the
expected does *not* happen. Used with
discretion and wit, this principle
can be used to good effect.

the types in this book:

Cover: Janson italic, a photograph of Caslon Old Style set in type, Caslon Old Style italic, and Eurostile; the enlarged 5 is Cloister Old Style italic.

1 Torino heading, Bodoni Book for text

2 12 pt. Janson throughout

3 Captions in Janson italic

4 Top left, Caslon Old Style; top right, Bodoni Book; lower left, Sapphire; lower right, Univers

5 Akzidenz Grotesk throughout

6 Caslon Old Style throughout

7 Captions in Akzidenz Grotesk

8 From upper left to lower right: Bodoni; Mademoiselle and Torino; Caslon; Baskerville; Univers 45; Univers 47; Univers 45 and 55; Palatino italic with Caslon ampersand

9 Baskerville throughout

10 Univers 45 and Univers 75 for light and bold in headings; Akzidenz Grotesk for text

11 Top left, Garamond and Garamond Bold; top right, Bodoni Book and Ultra Bodoni; lower left, Univers 45 and Univers 75; lower right, Caslon Old Style

12 Palatino throughout

13 Top panel, Bodoni; bottom panel, top to bottom, Bodoni roman, Bodoni roman and italic, Bodoni and Bank Script, Onyx and Bodoni

14 Specimen a's: Univers, Mistral, Beton; Goudy Text, Bodoni, Chisel. In panel: Mistral and Bodoni, Playbill and Bank Script, Latin Wide and Palatino italic

15 Upper square: Bodoni Book and Univers 55; heading, Torino and Eurostile; text, Scotch Roman

16 Upper square: Baskerville bold; heading, Ultra Bodoni italic and Aurora Condensed

17 Text in Times Bold

18 Two upper panels, Franklin Gothic Extra Condensed; lower panel, Caslon Old Style

19 Univers heading; text in Akzidenz Grotesk

20 Upper square: Akzidenz Grotesk; heading, Franklin Gothic Extra Condensed; text, News Gothic Condensed

21 Baskerville only

22 Granjon throughout

23 Bottom left, heading in Granjon; at right, Univers 75

24 Heading, Torino; text in Century Expanded italic

25 Vertical lines, Venus Light Extended; type in squares same as comparable squares in related text pages

26 Heading, Anzeigen Grotesk; ampersand, Caslon; upper text, Scotch italic; lower text, Scotch Roman

27 Heading, Torino; text, Bodoni Book; specimens at side, top to bottom: Eurostile and Bank Script; Optima and Goudy Text; Onyx and Ultra Bodoni; Legend and Lydian; Uncial and Twentieth Century Light; Playbill and Stymie Extrabold

28 Eurostile throughout

29 Center panel: Monotype Glagolithic 598 (used in parts of Jugoslavia); below, Monotype Thai 577

30 Franklin Gothic Extra Condensed, and Westvaco trade mark

31 Heading, News Gothic; text, News Gothic Bold, except for thirteenth line, which is in News Gothic Light.

written and designed by Carl Dair

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